

7/6/75

Dear Jim,

Herewith a carbon of my today's letter to Rhoads asking for the specified information and soliciting what I think he'll not be anxious to supply, explanations.

You will remember that you made the initial request for these records for me. I was then ill. I then explained my interests in detail to Marion Johnson. But I did not then know that there were giving me only a small fraction of the relevant records, that there was this extraordinary departure from normal ending of withholdings and that it would continue.

In fact, since then and since my vigorous letter to Rhoads on this I have received no other Nosenko or related papers other than those supplied me with what is described as all those of the 1973 declassification. I have no way of knowing whether I've received all of the latter but some of these were not then declassified because by volume most was only recently declassified. The most recent less than a month ago.

Rhoads has not yet responded. Nor has anyone else for him.

This is the rankest kind of discrimination and/or political usages of both classification and declassification and the release of what was withheld without ever having been classified and I'm talking about what did not qualify for even the lowest grade of classification. This is also true of what was classified: it did not qualify.

I would have postponed making these requests because of all the other things for which there is no time but after reading all that was sent me that relates to this (all, in fact, except a long paper on presidential protection) I felt it would be unwise to delay and that delay might prompt more similar malpractice.

The reasons for release at this time may be complicated and there may be more than one. But there is no reasonable doubt about the reasons for withholding. The Report totally suppresses any mention of Nosenko and all reports of all he said had to be suppressed because they are inimical if not in fact totally fatal to the preconceptions of the Commission and the executive agencies.

The CIA fobbed the Commission off in a March 12, 1964 meeting. It may be that some of this was not sent by accident so I wrote Jane Smith separately about that yesterday. But not only did those Commission people let Holmes and company stall then, they even tried to antic the CIA with offers of the valueless, their testimony not then published. (They even made false pretenses about their availability.)

Moreover, with the KGB believing that Oswald as a sleeper U.S. intelligence agent, thus not likely the FBI's, the CIA's motive for both the most vigorous questioning of Nosenko and the withholding of every word that was relevant to the Commission that it got from him is transparent. It is more than the suspicion about Oswald. It was all the nonsense about him and Marina in other areas, including leaving Russia. Without the totality of this suppression there could not have been this Report as it appeared.

This is a very serious matter, to the country and to me. The Archives has known of my desire for anything and everything on this general subject since I began researching Oswald in New Orleans. Aside from what my enormous correspondence files may show I discussed this with both Simons and Johnson. My interest was very broad on this. That chapter of the book I completed 2/15/65 is titled The Oswalds' Government Relations.

Political uses now also are serious matters. Dan Schorr and CBS have been conned into airing falsehood and propaganda on this, to a vast audience. If CBS was innocent in this the government cannot have been nor can McCone have been. Even if the CIA had wondered about Nosenko's dependability they had every obligation to let the Commission

do its own work and make its own decision and judgements.

The CIA was not the Commission.

The real reason, of course, is the Russian suspicion that Oswald was CIA. And this is what Nosenko really said.

Hoover was cute in his handling of all of it. I have already done a draft of part of that chapter for Agent Oswald. He laid it all out so he was ~~xxxx~~ in the clear, even suggesting that Nosenko be a Commission witness and then, for all the world as though the Commission did not know, telling it how to reach Nosenko. He went farther: the FBI agents got Nosenko to agree to an interview with the Commission.

Hoover knew the CIA could not let the Commission go into whether or not there was substantial Russian reason for believing ^{the} Oswald was an agent. He knew also that the Commission didn't want to. While I doubt that he wanted it either, his certainty that the others didn't enabled him to make a self-serving record tending to seem exculpatory of the FBI.

On the question of Nosenko's credibility, what McCone claimed was the question, there are two answers. First of all no ~~xxx~~ agency, CIA or State in particular, disputed the other things the FBI attributed to him-ever. And this was February and March. The Commission lasted until September. By then Nosenko had been checked out.

Besides, nobody of Nosenko's rank ~~xxxx~~ was going to try to be a double agent. He defected for what to him were serious reasons. From the first it had to be and I'm sure was taken as a real and genuine defection.

Moreover, on what he said about Oswald and Russian practises alone he had to be crazy to say what was so unwanted unless he was genuine. Then his personal interest required complete honesty. Any lying could have been very hurtful to him. From his background he could have expected them to be fatal.

While I have many other papers I will give you with this and recommend that you not read now I think this one is important enough for you to be aware of all of it. It has relevance to the current case. And it can be quite significant.

This can be a rather tricky matter. Therefore I'd rather you not mention it to anyone. I want to make as full as possible a record and get all the relevant records I've asked for without the Archives having another way of doing what they have done so often, leak to others. It is less easy if others are not asking.

Sincerely,